

**VA CAN Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2008**  
**10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon**

**Attendance**

Dana Brancolini, DEQ  
Keith Boisvert, DEQ  
Patricia Bishop, IRS  
Richard Rasmussen, DEQ  
Rodney Sobin, DEQ

**Main Discussion Points**

- Why do you or don't you attend VA CAN meetings on a regular basis?
- What were your motivations for first joining VA CAN? Are these still meaningful?
- How can the organization better serve you?
- Is the mission still valid?

**Open Discussion**

*Why do you or don't you attend VA CAN meetings on a regular basis?*

**Patricia Bishop, IRS:** This was Pat's first VA CAN, but she was familiar with the group and had heard many good things about VA CAN. Patricia thinks the meetings are beneficial. Through the network, IRS was able to create numerous relationships, including with VDOT and DPOR, that helped them reach out to their constituents. For example, their relationship with DPOR facilitated a successful outreach program to cosmetology schools, allowing IRS to provide valuable resources and information to individuals going into business.

**Keith Boisvert, DEQ:** Keith stated that the most useful part of the meeting for him is at the end of each meeting when individuals tell "what's new" with their office — new projects and upcoming events. For Keith, the speaker's presentation, while very interesting, are not as useful to him when he returns to the office. The ability to network with others is valuable.

*Considering that participation has decreased over the years, what changes can we make to the meetings to encourage members to participate?*

**Patricia Bishop, IRS:** Are the meeting advertised, and if so, how? Do you use other agencies' newsletters? Have you considered using various media outlets to get the word out?

**Dana Brancolini, DEQ:** We announce the meeting to members using a email list, and we post the meeting on the VA CAN web site.

**Rodney Sobin, DEQ:** Would providing the speaker and agenda well in advance encourage members to participate? The group agreed that Rodney's suggestion would help.

**Patricia Bishop, IRS:** Patricia provided a few suggestions, which have been successful for the IRS. The first being to have meetings over lunch at a set restaurant. Individual would pay for their own lunch, but this would provide members an opportunity to network. Another suggestion was to have the meeting by telephone; members could call in from their respective offices.

**Keith Boisvert, DEQ:** Keith suggested less meetings and that we should consider using a listserv mechanism. In place of bimonthly meetings, we should consider quarterly meetings. We should also conduct more outreach to businesses.

**Rodney Sobin, DEQ:** In addition to any changes we make, we need to update the email distribution list. Members have left their position, and we do not have replacements for them.

**Richard Rasmussen, DEQ:** Do we want to redefine our membership? For example, do we want to open the door to building a business marketplace?

**Rodney Sobin, DEQ:** Would providing a periodic update of member activity encourage greater participation? Members would be asked to send items, and DEQ would compile the information into an email "newsletter" and post additional information on the VA CAN site. VA CAN web site would provide greater detail on the items listed in the update. Members would have an active role in a periodic e-mail newsletter. The group agreed that this was a great idea.

**Dana Brancolini, DEQ:** Another idea for increasing participation would be to rotate the meeting "host" and the venue.

**Rodney Sobin, DEQ:** Should we consider regionalizing the program? There could be VA CAN-like groups throughout the state that network on a regional basis. If desired the regional groups could participate with the current group via telephone meetings. For example, perhaps the VA CAN could partner with the SBDCs, which could be used to foster regional groups.

**Richard Rasmussen, DEQ:** Should we consider hosting an annual or semi-annual business fair, or partner with others that are already taking place? The main obstacle here is funding.

## **Next Meeting**

April 17, 2008

10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

DEQ Piedmont Regional Office

4949-A Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA

There is the possibility that participants who can not attend in person may be able to call-in (please see the email).